

The Bus: The Visitors' Friend

by Janet Landers

Buses, they are indeed the friends of the international student. Not only do they provide an inexpensive, convenient way to travel around the city and the island, they can also provide assistance in the case of an emergency. Should you ever need emergency assistance you can approach the driver and he can contact the authorities on his radio for you.

There is one thing worth remembering about the busses on the island. Please try to stay awake! You don't want to miss your stop and you don't want to lose any of your belongings. With that in mind, you may also wish to keep your camera and other valuables concealed - or at least safe - when you are travelling by bus. For more info., please contact BC Transit.
- Janet Landers

A Friendly Warning

by Ron Vandervelde (ed. P.Unya)

There are many wonderful host families in Victoria and on the island. Unfortunately, sometimes trouble does arise. Over the past few months we have had a couple of concerns brought to our attention. This article by Ron Vandervelde (a host parent with a number of different programmes) is a follow-up to a letter he faxed to many of the schools in July.

Hat's off to all the good host families who give of themselves offering kindness and understanding, good meals and help to create a better world for their children and themselves by being great silent ambassadors for Canada.

I, however, feel that I must warn everyone that the good name Victoria has as the perfect place for homestay may be eroded by a few people who take advantage of the goodwill and cultural traditions of their students. Schools are doing their best but they cannot fully control the situation. In some cases, the students are making situations worse, themselves, because they will not complain. As a result, the teacher / homestay coordinator most often gets a positive impression when sometimes the situation may not merit it.

A counselor at one institution told me that a student, who left in the middle of the month, still owed rent for the remaining three months, even though the student had been moved to an unfinished basement where she could watch the ants crawl on the floor or the spiders on the wall. The negligent host is obviously unaware that when the property owner withdraws "creature comfort and security" that agreements or contracts are deemed null and void. Host families should each familiarise themselves with the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

It is the opinion of this writer that that the many good host families should accept the responsibility of taking an interest and sharing with the schools. Maybe, then, we can really begin to address the issues.

With that in mind, a group of host families have decided to start inviting other students to their homes and interviewing them on the street as well as reminding them to speak their mind. In my own home this year, most students called me direct from their respective countries and other families have had similar experiences. Students are becoming wary now of homestay - and not completely without reason.

As far as meals are concerned, parents, please ensure that your student has a proper meal. They are paying you. They deserve food, warmth and respect. They deserve to be taken in and befriended. This is the focus of homestay. They are not just boarders.

Hosting is not for those who pile a stack of pancakes in the fridge to be consumed for breakfast, lunch and dinner and then go out for dinner themselves. Excuses like "the furnace is not working well" will not keep the students warm. Students should not have to buy their own blankets. If you must resort to prepackaged food for every meal, are you sure that you should be hosting international students?

Day beds are another cause of complaints. They are designed to sleep guest for no more than three days.

There is a shortage of good homestay families which forces some schools to become more lenient. You may help the situation by becoming involved or by contacting me. - R.V.

Please feel free to contact the Association with any comments on this article. We will gladly forward them to Mr. Vandervlede on your behalf. - P. Unya

Saanich: Have Fun Bridging Cultures

Students already attending one of the many exceptional English Programmes in Victoria and those of us who love to get to know new people and experience new things will definitely be interested in this FREE programme sponsored by Saanich Recreation - *The Cultural Bridging Project*.

AN exciting part of this project is a conversation club. Consecutive programmes are run through Saanich Recreation. The next one begins September 28th. Please call Jane Glen (475 1775 ext. 3445) for more information.

At any one time, Saanich alone is a temporary home to in excess of 25 000 international students and the Co-ordinator of Special Projects, Jane Glen, with whom we were speaking, estimates that more than 50 languages are spoken in Saanich.

Signs at Saanich Recreation written in several languages are under review; a Language bank is being developed: this is a list of staff members who are bi or multi-lingual and who are able to help those who do not speak English confidently.

There is also the possibility that **Community volunteers may be added to the language bank**. The members of Saanich Receptions staff have participated in diversity training sessions!

Saanich is also looking for English-speaking “buddies” for those whose English language is limited.

If you or someone you know is an English student who would like to join the conversation club or if you would like to be a volunteer facilitator or a “buddy”, please call Jane Glen at (475 1775 ext. 3445) for more information.

If you have any valuable information that you would like to share with the International Student community please feel free to contact us at the Association (382 2055)

Did You Know?

Pete Unya

Western Etiquette

Etiquette is sometimes hard to understand at the best of times. When one is visiting a foreign country some of the appropriate customs can be quite confusing. With that in mind, we have looked back to tips from western etiquette books of the 13th, 14th and 15th century. Here are some of the valuable pieces of information we discovered.

From the 13th Century.

1. A number of people gnaw a bone and put it back in the dish - this is a serious offence.
2. Do not spit over or on the table in the manner of hunters.
3. When you blow your nose or cough, turn round so that nothing falls on the table.

Fourteenth Century:

1. A man who clears his throat when he eats, and one who blows his nose in the tablecloth, are both ill-bred, I assure you.
2. You should not poke your teeth with your knife, as some do; it is a bad habit.

Fifteenth:

1. Do not put back on your plate anything that has been in your mouth.
2. Do not chew anything you have to spit out again
3. It is bad manners to dip the food in the salt.

From Erasmus:

1. If you cannot swallow a piece of food, turn round discreetly and throw it somewhere.
2. Do not be afraid of vomiting if you must; for it is not vomiting but holding the vomit in your throat that is foul.

Source: Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things
by Charles Panati

The Amazing Museums on the Island

Victoria most definitely is not lacking in wonderful Museums for the student, tourist and local family. The Wax Museum (see ad on page 2) will put on special classes for students. They specialise in ensuring that students are 'edu-tained' - please call first. The famous Craigdarroch Castle of Dunsmuir fame (see ad - page 5) invites you to explore its historic rooms.

This issue we would like to shine the spotlight on the **Maritime Museum of British Columbia** (see ad on this page). It is located in Bastion Square and has a number of Exciting historical displays for you, your students and family. It is a great opportunity to experience.

the Maritime Museum of BC was established in 1954 as a non-profit society. The building features the oldest continuously operating elevator in North America, an ornate but reliable cage lift which was installed in 1899.

The colourful story of British Columbia's maritime history is told in the various theme galleries: Early Exploration, Canadian Pacific Steamships, Royal Canadian Navy, BC Ferries, and the Vice Admiralty Courtroom.

On display is a vast collection of ship models and maritime treasures, including *Tilikim*, the First Nations dugout canoe which Captain John Voss sailed from Victoria to England between 1901 and 1904.

The Maritime Museum continues to manage a ten thousand volume reference library as well as a collection of over 40,000 ship plans.

The student rate is \$3.00. The family rate is \$13.00 (2 adults and up to 3 children). **A resident's pass allows unlimited visits for an entire year; it only costs \$10.00.**

We, of course, cannot neglect the world renowned Royal British Columbia Museum; when you visit them be sure not to miss the **IMAX**. It is worth a visit on its own merit.

COMING SOON..... Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man opens September 22, 2000. Enjoy the awe-inspiring artistry and inventiveness of Canada's Cirque du Soleil combined with the wonderful intimacy of the large format film experience. Filmed at beautiful locations throughout the world, Cirque du Soleil Journey of Man appeals to all ages - children, teens, adults and seniors alike. This film is a must see for everyone.

The most requested IMAX film is the Fires of Kuwait. It also opens September 22, 2000. Witness victory in this academy award nominated Imax experience! Against the backdrop of eighty-foot high blazing fires, Fires of Kuwait is the story of human ingenuity and courage, a tribute to international firefighters' heroism and initiative. Battling flames and massive black clouds of smoke which completely blotted out the sun for hundreds of miles, the compelling story of the superhuman efforts to douse the flames has received rave reviews from audiences worldwide.

Banana Gloomf

As all beloved family recipes, this one has developed its own special name. If your company demands a more elegant appellation, "Graham Cracker Torte" should suffice!

INGREDIENTS

2c graham cracker crumbs	1/2 t salt
1/2 c sugar	2 eggs
1/4 c melted butter	1 1/2 t vanilla
2 2/3 c milk	1 T butter
2 1/2 T cornstarch	2 bananas

Crumble cracker crumbs well. Add 1/4 c sugar and melted butter. Blend well. Scald 2 c milk. Add cornstarch, salt and 1/4 c sugar, diluted in remaining 2/3 c milk. Bring to boil, stirring constantly. Cook over hot water 15 minutes. Beat eggs; add a little of hot mixture to beaten eggs; return to double boiler. Cook 3 minutes. Blend in 1 T butter. Cool. Cover. Add vanilla.

To assemble, place half of prepared crumbs in straight-sided pan; cover with half of filling. (Layer should be 3/4 inch thick). Cover with 2 sliced bananas. Add remainder of filling. Top with remaining crumbs. Pat down. Chill thoroughly. Cut in squares. Serves 6 to 8. Serve topped with whipped cream.